Student Film Screened at World’s Top Fantasy Film Festival

The thesis film by alumna Agnes Baginska had its premiere last month at the world’s top festival for fantasy – being one of just 23 short films out of over 2,000 submissions to make it into the Official Fantastic Selection of the Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival in Spain.

“It is truly a great honor and I couldn’t have wished for a better start for the film,” said Ms. Baginska, a 2016 graduate of the David Lynch Graduate School of Cinematic Arts. “Sitges was amazing and I enjoyed every single minute there. It was the experience of a lifetime.”

At the heart of the 30-minute film, titled Last Tree Standing, is Tree-man, a half-tree, half-man character played by Fairfield’s Lou Bolster. Also starring is Maharishi School’s Sage Jarmosco as Lexie.

The setting is the year 2071, when all trees are gone in a dystopian world except for the remnants embodied by Tree-man. Taken for a freak, Tree-man is captured by Lexie’s keeper, Killian (Steve Kennevan), to be sold to the ministry that buys such mutations. Intrigued by the strange creature, Lexie slowly discovers his story and despite the threats of her hostile keeper, she embarks on a dangerous mission to free Tree-man.

Also appearing in the film is MUM alumna Jada Foster as Gage.

A two-minute trailer can be viewed at goo.gl/Mexpw7.

Ms. Baginska said her film, being a student film, had a minimal budget and was competing with films from professional production houses with proper production budgets. It was the only medium-length short in the Sitges competition, and one of only five directed by a woman.

It was screened alongside feature films that had been presented at Cannes earlier

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
in the year. And like Cannes, those attending included top-level movie stars, directors, and producers such as Guillermo del Toro, William Friedkin, and Susan Sarandon.

More recently *Last Tree Standing* has been accepted into the competition at Les Utopiales de Nantes - International Sci-Fi Festival, the most important Sci-Fi event in Europe. And the film’s French premiere took place earlier this month at Salle Solaris in Nantes, France.

In addition, *Last Tree Standing* has been nominated for the 2017 Australian Screen Music Awards – a prestigious ceremony acknowledging excellence and innovation in screen composition.

Ms. Baginska had intended to develop a different idea for her film, but the image of a half-man, half-tree came to her and wouldn’t leave. Puzzled, she talked to David Lynch, who described a process she could use to let the new idea emerge.

She realized it would be expensive to produce a fantasy genre film, but a successful Kickstarter campaign allowed the project to go into production.

Ms. Baginska’s teachers encouraged her to treat the production as if in a professional environment, so she reached out to companies and executive producers based in the U.S., Australia, and Poland. As a result, she lined up further funding, allowing her to complete the film. The additional funding was provided by ZPM Film, Headhunters Film, and Far from Everything Films.

### FROM THE FOUNDER

“I f an undertaking is started from a pure, expanded consciousness, then the resources come to hand according to the need. In the case of a man of highly evolved consciousness there is hardly any need for planning. That which comes to mind leads the course of action, and nature provides resources for it’s fulfillment.”

— Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Science of Being*

### Study Finds Increased Blood Flow to Heart in Cardiovascular Patients

The Transcendental Meditation® technique has been shown to increase blood flow in the hearts of subjects recovering from a heart attack according to a new study led by Robert Schneider, MD, FACC, dean of MUM’s College of Integrative Medicine.

The study was conducted in collaboration with physicians at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York.

Dr. Schneider presented the results of this pilot study last week at the annual meeting of the American Heart Association in Anaheim, California.

“Decreased blood flow to the heart is the main problem in a heart attack, so rehabilitation focuses on increasing that flow,” Dr. Schneider said. “We showed that when Transcendental Meditation is added to cardiac rehabilitation, that’s most effective for recovery.”

Medical professionals are becoming increasingly interested in the use of meditation to treat and prevent cardiovascular disease, and earlier this month Dr. Schneider was invited to speak to cardiovascular specialists at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

“The University of Iowa Medical Center was one of the pioneers of the brain-heart connection, and they were very impressed with the extensive data I presented from the studies on Transcendental Meditation we’ve done over the past 30 years,” Dr. Schneider said.

Those studies have looked at many different cardiovascular risk conditions, such as blood pressure, atherosclerosis, heart rate variability, left ventricular hypertrophy, cholesterol, and insulin resistance.

In October Dr. Schneider was invited to speak to physicians and researchers at the University of California – Los Angeles, the University of California – San Diego, Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Veterans Administration.

As some alternative approaches are increasingly becoming evidence-based, physicians are eager to learn about these new breakthroughs in medical care, Dr. Schneider said. He spoke on heart disease, Maharishi AyurVedaSM, and aging, and summarized the recent statement by the American Heart Association.

“They were eager to learn about it from someone who did a lot of the original research covered by the recent AHA statement,” Dr. Schneider said. “And because I have clinical experience, I was also able to tell them how to apply this knowledge in their clinical practice.”

### The Review

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Professor Shad Coauthors Paper on Location Data

The accuracy of location data on mobile devices such as smartphones is addressed in a new paper coauthored by Professor Shafqat Ali Shad and published in the journal Applied Artificial Intelligence.

Mobile devices are increasingly relying on a user's location information, whether for tourist guides, friends' locations, early warning systems, or other uses, but often the data is incomplete, such as when mobile carriers make changes to their network.

Dr. Shad and his coauthors proposed a method for predicting movement and building trajectories of the location of the mobile device. These trajectories then fill in the missing data.

The authors propose converting geo-coordinates into semantic tags and also using a clustering methodology to recover missing values.

Dr. Shad, who has expertise in big data and data mining, is a native of Pakistan and received his doctorate in engineering from the University of Science and Technology of China.

Online MBA in Sustainability Rated #5 in Nation

The website MBA Central has ranked MUM's MBA in Sustainability among the top 10 in the country, placing it as #5.

Criteria include affordability, support for students who need to study online, average class size, and percentage of faculty with the highest degrees in their field.

The writeup on MBA Central includes details about MUM, Consciousness-Based education, and accreditation, as well as extensive detail specifically about MUM's MBA in sustainability.

MBA Central also ranks the top MBA programs in a dozen other categories, such as entrepreneurship, finance, and agribusiness.

See goo.gl/vZRNgX for more information.

In addition, MUM was recently named one of Iowa's best four-year colleges in a new list from Schools.com.

MUM came in at #8 on the list, alongside other well-known institutions such as Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and Briar Cliff University. Data used to create the list came from U.S. Department of Education sources and included factors ranging from tuition & affordability to the presence of online degrees and more.

According to the website, MUM ranks #8 in the state in regard to tuition affordability. Only two other schools on their list offer a higher proportion of institutional grant aid.

The website also recognized MUM as being one of the top online colleges for Iowa students, ranking #3 in the state for its percentage of students enrolled in distance education courses.

See www.schools.com/online-colleges/iowa.

Rocketry Team Invited to NASA Student Launch

After performing well in a national competition, the Maharishi School rocketry team has now been invited by the U.S. National and Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) to be part of NASA's 2017-18 Student Launch.

The team is one of just 15 middle and high schools teams nationwide invited to take part along with 45 college and university teams.

The selected rocketry teams receive guidance from a NASA project management team throughout a rigorous seven-month process of development and documentation before the final launch in Huntsville, Alabama next April.

"Now the real hard work begins," said team coach Rick Rudloff. "I'm so excited for our team to have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." For more information, see goo.gl/aXPRcP.

MBA Alumna Crowned Miss Ethiopia USA

Alumna Yodit Denekew was recently crowned Miss Ethiopia at the 2017 Miss Ethiopia USA Pageant in Washington, DC.

The mission of Miss Ethiopia USA is to recognize women who are involved in promoting the Ethiopian culture and supporting humanitarin causes.

As Miss Ethiopia USA, Ms. Denekew plans to use her title as a platform for empowering young women to pursue higher education. She will implement her plans under the aegis of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women through fundraising events and traveling to Ethiopia to spread her message.

She grew up in rural Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, where she witnessed underprivileged women struggling to have access to education. She became passionate about changing the situation and has volunteered with various organizations, including United Nations Volunteers.

Ms. Denekew came to MUM in 2014 for the MBA in accounting. She enjoyed the cultural and ethnic diversity of the MUM campus and appreciated the self-development that Consciousness-Based education offers. She also found that her classes provided relevant and up-to-date knowledge, and she was well-prepared to begin her career.

She graduated from MUM in 2015 and is currently working as an auditor at a public accounting firm in the Washington, DC area. She is also preparing for her Certified Public Accountant (CPA) certification.

In addition, she serves on the board of the Ethio-American Society of CPAs and Finance Professionals, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to building leaders who shape the future of accounting, auditing, and finance professionals.

See missethiopiausapageant.com.
Work Nearly Done on New Amphitheater

Work is now nearly complete on the amphitheater east of the Argiro Student Center, including seating for over 100, a stage, and landscaping.

In addition, both fiber-optic cable and TV cable were laid, allowing events to take advantage of internet access and TV.

Named the Olson Family Amphitheater, the project was funded by Peggy Olson and her late husband Marty of California.

The amphitheater is part of Younger Park, named for long-time MUM donor Gil Younger. More developments are being planned for the park.

Film Series by Professor Barnard at ICON Gallery

Fairfield’s ICON Gallery is currently offering a film series on Thursday evenings through December 14 featuring the work of Professor Michael Barnard, director of MUM’s David Lynch School of Cinematic Arts.

The series began with Professor Barnard’s 90-minute documentary on the inside story of the creation of Dale Chihuly’s monumental work “Chihuly Over Venice.” The film is an intimate look at the creative process as it is happening and has the unique distinction of being a film made by an artist about an artist.

On Thursday Nov. 16 and 30 and December 7, the series will feature short films on a diverse spectrum of artistic endeavor. These films cover a wide array of disciplines including architecture, painting, performance art, choreography, and interdisciplinary works. Many were commissioned by the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and the 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica.

Some of the subjects include famed architect I.M. Pei and his son C.C. Pei, as well as Fairfield’s own Jonathan Lipman.

The series will end December 14 with the newly revised version of the feature documentary Secrets of the Sun - The Solar Environmental Art of Peter Erskine. This film is an exploration of the making of Peter Erskine’s transcendent solar spectrum environmental artwork and the creation of the initial exhibition in Rome.

Professor Barnard, an award-winning filmmaker and visual artist, has made many different kinds of films in locations around the world as producer, director, writer, editor, and director of photography. In 1980 he established his own Santa Monica based film production and fine art company – Bolt PIX Studios.

Doors open at 7:30 for free refreshments, and the films begin at 8:00 pm.

ICON Thursday is free to ICON members. Others are asked for a $2 donation. ICON Gallery is located at 58 N. Main St. in Fairfield.

Information about Fairfield
fairfieldinfocenter.org
Arts & entertainment, businesses, celebrations, clubs, events, food, housing & lodging, jobs, health services, parks, shopping, tours, and more.

Dining Hall Menu Online
Visit mum.edu/menu

MUM Online

Bhagavad Gita

Bhagavad-Gita 1 Begins
February 5 (Chapters 1-3)
Bhagavad-Gita 2 Begins
April 16 (Chapters 4-6)
Register now for spring 2018.

The Bhagavad-Gita contains the essence of the detailed knowledge of consciousness contained in the Vedic literature.

These courses study Maharishi’s commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita, which provides a systematic exposition of the development of human consciousness, its relationship to knowledge, and its application to improve the quality of individual and collective life and accomplish anything.

Learn more at www.mum.edu/mum-online/noncredit-courses. Questions? Please contact de@mum.edu.